

## **Bokoch V. Religion in hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine**

Based on analysis of condition of different confessions, the religious situation in occupied Donbass is researched. It turns out that religious policy in self-proclaimed republics is heading towards, on one side, to consolidation of Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, but on the other side, to crowding out of other religions from occupied territories. Through the help of Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate the idea of the so-called "Russian World" is implemented among different categories of population. Russian Orthodox Church was involved into Donbass conflict and its head, Patriarch Cyril. By hiding Russian aggression in Ukraine, he is trying to picture it as "civil conflict". Pro-Russian position as to the Donbas developments is also taken by a part of bishops of Ukrainian Orthodox Church clergy. It reinforced negative attitude of Ukrainian population and lead to acceleration of the transition of religious communities under the authority of the Kyiv Patriarchate. Attempts of the orthodox religious communities to change their inferiority are related to the reinforcement of their Pro-Ukrainian positions. It is stated that in occupied Donbass territories, Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church turned out to be in a complicated situation. Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Protestant religious organizations. Considering a difficult state of faithful Catholics in the breakaway republic, Vatican, the Pope provides them material aid and spiritual support. Since the policy of «DNR» and «LNR» is aimed at complete eradication of "sects" of Donbas, the actions of the occupation authorities significantly affected Protestant believers. Due to organizational fragmentation, in occupied territories of Donbass faithful Muslims failed to develop a common political position. The article states that harassment and persecution of various religious organizations, clergymen, leaving their followers to safe areas in the occupied territories of Donbass greatly diminished religious network, the number of communities, churches occupancy. The normalization of religious and church life in the region is inextricably linked with the cessation of armed conflict and its de-occupation.

**Key words:** hybrid war, religion, politics and religion, separatism, Donbass occupation, oppression and religious persecution, religious situation in the occupied Donbas.